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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : AD/ORE

DATE: 13 December 1949

FROM : D/In

SUBJECT: Comments on Staff Study re Far East Intelligence Concepts.

1. D/In believes that the effort to establish broad concepts to guide national intelligence production is entirely sound in principle. Moreover, D/In believes that the D/FE plan is a constructive step forward in developing such concepts for a vital region.

2. However, the analysis of the problem in the Staff Study and the conclusions drawn therein appear in some respects imperfectly thought out, poorly phrased, and in general inadequate to serve as basic concepts for guiding national intelligence production.

3. The Staff Study is replete with implicit policy conclusions. It assumes for example, that the US, as one protagonist in an over-simplified global struggle, must "strive to control, within whatever limitations their (its) principles impose, those elements of human and material power (sic) in the Far East which will ultimately help to weigh a world balance in their favor." To our knowledge this is not and never has been, US policy. We have rarely, except in the train of a war, sought to "control" Far Eastern areas, we have merely been concerned: (a) that no one else control them; (b) that we have such access as needed to their resources; and (c) that the area be sufficiently stable and prosperous to prevent developments unfavorable to our interests. Perhaps we should strive to "control" the Far East's power potential, but that is for the NSC, not D/FE, to decide.

4. The Staff Study contains a number of a priori assumptions which might better be the conclusions of a national intelligence production program than serve as a basis for it. For example, is it so sure that Soviet harnessing of Far Eastern potentials would confront the US with a "possibly decisive disadvantage?" Par. 3 above indicates another a priori assumption.

5. Moreover, the Staff Study implicitly presumes to assess, again a priori, the relative importance of the Far East as compared to other regions. The assessment may well be correct but shouldn't this problem be examined on a global basis first, before each Division proceeds to call its region the "vital" one?

6. Reference par. 2d, we think it wrong to say that because "the threat of war always exists," it is more urgent to take stock of potentialities for war. We think that the global US - USSR struggle short of war is far more important under present circumstances.

7. The emphasis in the Staff Study is on vulnerability to the USSR and Soviet potentialities. We feel it is equally important, and should be clearly so stated, to study factors favorable to the US and unfavorable to the USSR.


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8. Finally, the Staff Study is over-simplified in its exclusive concentration on the Far East only as a factor in the US - USSR conflict. It is unnecessarily limiting oneself to consider the Far East solely in terms of the region's power resources being manipulated by the US and USSR. This may be true in the short and medium term but is it necessarily so for the long term, i.e. some fifteen or twenty years from now? Indeed, US policy perhaps overoptimistically foresees Titoist possibilities in China. There are strong conflicting interests between China and the USSR (Manchuria, Dairen, Sinkiang, Mongolia, etc.). In the long run it is possible that an independent power center might develop. Even in the shorter run it is conceivable that there will be a strong trend toward neutrality among Far Eastern areas. While we recognize that these possibilities are implicit in the Far East statement of Conclusions, we feel that the emphasis is far too rigidly on US vs. USSR control, leading to a dangerously oversimplified approach. There are factors in the Far East, such as anti-colonialism and anti-Westernism, which would be of concern to the US regardless of the US - Soviet power struggle.

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